

ecoNews — Wire —

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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For immediate release

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DISTRICT COURT ORDERS TAVERN IN CANTON TO CLOSE

MAQUOKETA – The Jackson County District Court issued a temporary injunction on Tuesday to close R&S Tavern (also known as Long Branch Tavern) in Canton.

The tavern, owned by Randal Schoenherr of Monmouth, is to remain closed until water quality sampling requirements have been met.

The court will lift the injunction when R&S Tavern complies with the following water quality requirements:

- conducts quarterly water sampling for coliform bacteria and annual water sampling for nitrate levels,
- operates with a current water supply permit issued by the DNR,
- pays annual fees due for the last three years, and
- notifies the public of times that water sampling requirements have not been met.

In other action, the court granted a continuance until July 6 on contempt of court charges for failure to comply with past court orders related to the water supply RS Tavern.

“It’s important for all public drinking water sources to sample the water at regular intervals,” said Michele Smith, an environmental specialist with the Manchester DNR field office. “Unless they sample and report the results, we can’t guarantee the water is safe to drink.”

Smith added that if a water sampling indicates that there is a problem, the DNR asks for more frequent sampling to determine the extent of the problem and may require treatment of the water.

The DNR initially referred the case with R&S Tavern to the Attorney General's office on June 27, 1997. The Attorney General's office filed a lawsuit in December of 1998 after Schoenherr failed to comply with three administrative orders from the DNR.

For more information, contact Tim Benton at the Attorney General's office, (515) 281-5351, regarding legal matters; or Mike Wade at the Manchester DNR field office, (563) 927-2640, with water supply questions.

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NEW PROGRAM PROVIDES LOW INTEREST LOANS FOR LIVESTOCK/WATER QUALITY PROJECTS

DES MOINES — A new water quality program to assist livestock producers with the environmental management of their facilities is now available. The Livestock Water Quality Facilities Program will offer low-interest loans for equipment, structures, plantings, and other efforts to prevent non-point source pollution of Iowa's waters relating to animal feeding operations.

The loan program will be administered by the Iowa Agricultural Development Authority (IADA), in cooperation with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the Iowa Finance Authority. Loans are available for animal feeding operations with less than 1,000 total animal unit capacity, that were constructed before December 31, 2001. Applicants must have a comprehensive nutrient management plan or develop one as part of the proposed project.

"The interest rate is 3 percent for up to 20 years. We can loan 100 percent of the project costs, or the loans can be used in combination with other federal and state grants and loans," said Jeff Ward, executive director of the IADA.

Livestock Water Quality Facilities Program is one of the new uses for the State Revolving Fund (SRF), according to DNR Director Jeff Vonk.

"The SRF is one of the tools we have to address our state's water quality problems. This new program provides us a way to help livestock producers improve their facilities with water quality improvements in mind," he said.

The Iowa Finance Authority, DNR's financial partner in the SRF, has helped to identify how much of the fund can be used for non-point source projects. "We have set aside \$3 million for the first year of the livestock program, and we're looking forward to putting those funds to work for water quality protection," said Bret Mills, IFA executive director.

Additional information about the program is available from the Iowa Agricultural Development Authority at 515-281-6444 or on the web at www.iowasrf.com.

For more information, contact Jeff Ward at 515-281-6444.

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NEWS MEDIA'S PARTICIPATION NEEDED TO ORGANIZE BEACH MONITORING MEDIA EVENTS

DES MOINES — As the weather gets warmer and swimming season comes closer, the DNR is asking members of the news media to complete a survey that will help the DNR organize beach monitoring media events across the state.

The information will be used to organize media days that will explain the beach monitoring process and address the media's concerns.

Please answer the following questions and return your responses to Jessie Rolph at Jessie.Rolph@dnr.state.ia.us by Wednesday, May 11. Return your responses in the body of an e-mail by typing the number of the question and then your answer.

1. Would you be interested in attending a media event regarding DNR beach monitoring at one of three or four sites around the state?
☐ Yes
☐ No

2. How far would you be willing to travel to attend a media event?
☐ 0-25 miles
☐ 25-50 miles
☐ 50-75 miles
☐ 75-100 miles
☐ 100-150 miles

3. What type of media are you associated with?
☐ Newspaper
☐ Television
☐ Radio
☐ Web
☐ Other _____

4. What city or town are you located in?

5. During past swimming seasons, how often did you report on beach monitoring results (on average)?
☐ Once a week
☐ Once a month

- ☐ Once or twice during the entire swimming season
 - ☐ Never
6. How big of a concern to your audience are state park beaches' bacteria levels?
- ☐ Very important
 - ☐ Somewhat important
 - ☐ Neutral
 - ☐ Not very important
 - ☐ Not important at all
7. What issues would you like to have addressed at a beach monitoring media event?

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WATER QUALITY MEETINGS SCHEDULED FOR WILLIAMSON POND AND SPRING LAKE

DES MOINES — Public meetings to discuss plans for improving water quality at Williamson Pond in Lucas County and Spring Lake in Greene County will be held over the next two weeks.

A public meeting to discuss water quality at Williamson Pond will be held on Monday May 16 at 6:30 p.m. at the Pin Oak Lodge south of Chariton on Highway 14. DNR staff will also be present to discuss water quality at Spring Lake at the May 11 meeting of the Greene County Conservation Board.

Everyone who is interested is encouraged to attend the public meeting.

A TMDL — or Total Maximum Daily Load — is the name of the process being used to address waters considered to be impaired. TMDLs are calculations used to determine how much of a pollutant a water body can receive and still maintain its designated use such as maintaining aquatic life, allowing body contact such as swimming or being used as a drinking water supply.

Much of the focus at the upcoming meetings will be to discuss the water quality impairments at Williamson Pond and Spring Lake and to discuss the TMDL process with local residents and stakeholders. A second public meeting will be held in the fall of 2005 to discuss the draft TMDLs and to solicit public comments on the documents.

Information regarding the TMDL Program and the development of TMDLs for Williamson Pond and Spring Lake will be available at the meetings and on the DNR's Web site at www.iowadnr.com/water/tmdlwqa/

For more information, contact Chris Van Gorp at (515) 281-4791.

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WATER QUALITY MEETING SCHEDULED FOR OTTUMWA LAGOON

DES MOINES — A meeting to discuss plans for improving water quality at Ottumwa Lagoon will be held at 6 p.m. May 18 at Ottumwa City Hall.

A TMDL - or Total Maximum Daily Load - is currently being developed for Ottumwa Lagoon. TMDLs are calculations used to determine how much of a pollutant a water body can receive and still maintain its designated uses such as maintaining aquatic life, allowing body contact such as swimming or being used as a drinking water supply. TMDLs also include plans on how water quality can be improved through conservation efforts and pollution control in the watershed.

Ottumwa Lagoon is included on the State's 303(d), or impaired waters list, for water quality impairments related to excessive growth of algae, turbidity and chlordanes contamination. Nuisance algal blooms and algal turbidity are the consequence of excess nutrients. These conditions promote heavy algal blooms through the summer and fall leading to the predominance of blue-green algae, limited clarity, floating algal scum, and the prevalence of rough fish.

Chlordane is a pesticide that was commonly used in agriculture and for termite control. Although chlordane was banned in 1988, it degrades very slowly in the environment and accumulates in fish tissue. A fish consumption advisory issued in 2001 remains in place for Ottumwa Lagoon due to high levels of chlordane found in channel catfish.

The lake's designated uses are for primary body contact such as swimming and maintaining aquatic life for fishing.

Much of the focus at the upcoming meeting will be on what data has been collected on Ottumwa Lagoon to document the problem and what steps are being taken to develop a plan to address the impairments.

Additional information on the TMDL program is available on the DNR's Web site at: www.iowadnr.com/water/tmdlwqa/index.html.

For more information, contact Larry Bryant at (515) 281-6759 or via e-mail at larry.bryant@dnr.state.ia.us.

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NORTH FORK MAQUOKETA RIVER WATER QUALITY MEETING SCHEDULED

NEW VIENNA – The DNR will hold a meeting to discuss potential causes of biological impairments in the North Fork Maquoketa River May 18 at 7:30 p.m. at New Vienna City Hall.

The North Fork Maquoketa River is included on the state's 303(d) list of impaired waters. It was added to the impaired waters list due to biological impairments related to low-diversity populations of fish and aquatic insects.

The meeting will focus on the steps to be taken to identify the habitat and water quality issues that are causing the biological impairments. The DNR is very interested in local residents' input. Local information as well as water quality monitoring data will be used in determining the reasons for the impairment.

For more information, contact Danelle Haake at (515) 281-6064 or via e-mail at danelle.haake@dnr.state.ia.us.